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**SCHAKOWSKY: *THERE IS NO ROOM FOR U.S.-HIRED PARAMILITARIES
& MERCENARIES IN AN
INTERROGATION CELL***

**RENEWS CALL FOR SUSPENSION OF CONTRACTS WITH PRIVATE FIRMS
CONDUCTING INTERROGATION AT IRAQI AND AFGHANI PRISONS FOLLOWING
INDICTMENT OF CIA CONTRACTOR**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Following the indictment of a CIA contractor for the death of prisoner in Afghanistan, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today renewed her call for the Bush Administration to immediately suspend all contracts with private firms conducting interrogations of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan.□□

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"There is no room for U.S.-hired paramilitaries and mercenaries in an interrogation cell.□□ This is a dangerous and deadly mix that has contributed to the prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq and could only lead to a more dangerous situation for U.S. military and civilian personnel at home and abroad, unless it is immediately stopped," Schakowsky said.

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"Private contractors should not be entrusted with the interrogation of prisoners because they fall outside the official command structure and operate without clear protocols for oversight and accountability.□ President Bush must suspend all contracts with U.S.-hired paramilitary firms operating within U.S. prison facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan and put an end to this dangerous policy," Schakowsky added.□□

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In a letter sent to President Bush last month, Schakowsky wrote, *"the sadistic abuses of Iraqis at a U.S. military prison raise serious questions about the accountability of U.S.-hired private military contractors who are involved in illegal activity. pending□ a thorough investigation and appropriate action, including, but not limited to, the dismissal and prosecution of those involved, all contracts with civilian firms for functions involving security, supervision and interrogation of prisoners, should be suspended."*

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Schakowsky had also requested copies of all contracts that the Pentagon signed with private firms providing supervision, security or interrogation services in Iraqi prisons.□ So far, the White House has only acknowledged the receipt of Schakowsky's request.□ Recently, she introduced legislation to require the Department of Defense to supply

Congress with copies and descriptions of new contracts and task orders worth more than \$1 million that the Pentagon signs with private firms to conduct business in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Schakowsky is a longtime critic of the increasing use of taxpayer-funded private military contractors by the U.S. government in places like Colombia and Iraq and has said that she "opposes the use of military contractors who are not subject to the same kind of scrutiny and accountability as U.S. soldiers."